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## Editorial

Reap the gains of the struggle to overthrow the US-Estrada regime!

# Continue strengthening and intensifying the Filipino people's revolutionary struggle under the Macapagal-Arroyo regime!

The revolutionary movement is in an excellent position to reap the gains of the overthrow of the Estrada regime in the field of expanding and consolidating its organized ranks, the united front and armed struggle.

The Party and the revolutionary movement harbor no illusions that there will be fundamental changes in the rotten semicolonial and semifeudal social system. Under the Macapagal-Arroyo regime, imperialist domination and plunder, oppression by the local ruling class, the people's wretchedness and state violence and deception will continue.

Nonetheless, especially in the early part of Macapagal-Arroyo's rule, we must continue to assert the people's agenda and demand that Macapagal-Arroyo put this at the center of her program.

To defend the people's interests, we must therefore continue to persevere along the path of

revolution, in all fields of struggle, especially in the arena of armed struggle.

### THE ESSENCE AND DIRECTION OF THE MACAPAGAL-ARROYO REGIME

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is the current chief of the neocolonial puppet government. She and her government represent the interests of foreign monopoly capitalism and the local exploitative classes of the big comprador bourgeoisie and big landlords. Likewise, Macapagal-Arroyo represents foremost, the factional interests of the Ramos clique versus those of





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the Estrada-Marcos and Aquino-Cojuangco cliques.

Nonetheless, the Macapagal-Arroyo regime is distinct for having been the product of a democratic mass movement that overthrew the despised corrupt Estrada government. At the core of this mass movement is the united front of the toiling masses, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie and anti-Estrada reactionaries.

But due to her haste in ensuring their factional interests, Macapagal-Arroyo first attended to appointing pro-Ramos personalities, especially former generals and pro-imperialist technocrats. Meanwhile, up to now, Macapagal-Arroyo has not taken any move to address the people's grievances.

The new government has boasted that there has been a "return of foreign investor confidence" after Estrada's overthrow. But the real and fundamental economic problems of the Philippines lie in the domination and plunder committed by foreign monopoly capitalists and their local big capitalist partners and their obstruction of basic industrial development and genuine land reform. To address the people's economic interests, radical steps must be undertaken, including the reversal of the policies of liberalization, deregulation and denationalization that were all zealously advanced by Macapagal-Arroyo in the past.

Macapagal-Arroyo's cabinet is noticeably filled with fascist ex-AFP officials who are experts in psywar, including Gen. Fidel Ramos. They are known to use the cloak of "peace" to cover up the more basic policy of using fascist violence within the framework of advancing counterrevolutionary war against the people.

The basis for a possible critical alliance between progressive, patriotic and democratic forces on the one hand and the Macapagal-Arroyo regime on the other, is eroding as Macapagal-Arroyo continues to refuse addressing the people's interests. Especially in the face of threats to her government's stability, it will be good for Macapagal-Arroyo to positively address the democratic demands of the united front that catapulted her to power and woo its support and assistance for her regime.

She needs to promptly address the people's cries, among them the prosecution of Estrada; a thoroughgoing campaign against corruption and anomalies in government; immediate remedies and long-term improvements in livelihood, wages and housing; genuine land reform for the peasant masses; repudiation of the policies of denationalization, deregulation, liberalization, contractualization, casualization and other forms of enslavement; repudiation of militarization, militarism and total war and meting justice to victims; and setting aside of the VFA and resistance to US intervention in the country's internal affairs.

## THE TASKS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

The revolutionary movement is in an excellent position to harvest a lot from the struggle to overthrow the Estrada regime. Its correct perseverance in advancing the mass movement and expanding and consolidating the united front have put the revolutionary forces in such an excellent position to take advantage of the favorable situation and further strengthen and advance in an all-sided way.

We must maintain the high level of militancy of the Filipino people primarily through solidly organizing the broad masses who participated in anti-Estrada demonstrations, especially students, workers, the urban poor, professionals and church people.

We must painstakingly conduct political education and revolutionary propaganda to sum up their experience in the anti-Estrada struggle, clarify the situation and tasks under the Macapagal-Arroyo regime, raise their consciousness on Philippine history and society and win them over to the path of revolution. We must also win over the urban poor who were deceived by Estrada and advance their interests with the people in general.

Along with this, we must continue to strengthen and expand the anti-Estrada united front towards advancing genuine social and national change. Nurture relations that have been formed and expanded in the course of advancing the protest movement. This may be done on the national, provincial or regional level and in the localities. We must use these linkages not only to advance political struggles but also to reach out to the broad masses and establish our solid organized strength in the basic level.

We must also continually expose the counterrevolutionary forces masquerading as "Leftist". In particular, we must expose their past attempt to divide the anti-Estrada united front through twisted slogans and mixing up strategic and tactical issues. We must also expose their corrupt practices, especially the Sanlakas-BMP's sellout of the interests of workers and the urban poor.

Above all else, we must continue to intensify the revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside. We must continue to strengthen and increase the number of guerrilla fronts, advance the antifeudal struggles of the peasant masses, launch more and bigger tactical offensives and expand and consolidate the revolutionary mass base. We must continue to encourage the urban forces to go to the countryside and join the revolutionary armed struggle.

The NDFP's openness to renewed peace talks is in accordance with revolutionary principles and the program of people's democratic revolution. This is an added arena of struggle to advance the people's interests, propagate the program of the national democratic revolution and expose the reactionary state's utter lack of interest to advance the people's welfare.

The movement by hundreds of thousands of people in EDSA and in the entire country that ousted Estrada is a warning to Macapagal-Arroyo that her every move and every policy or law she issues will closely be watched by the people. Any trampling of the interests of the toiling masses, every violation of democratic rights, all manner of treachery to the national interest and subservience to foreign interests will spur another people's uprising. **AB**

## Punish Estrada!

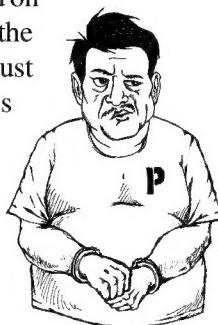
THE PUNISHMENT OF ESTRADA AND ALL of the biggest criminals and plunderers shall be the people's foremost basis in judging the Macapagal-Arroyo regime's will to uphold the aspirations of EDSA 2.

Steps to arrest, prosecute and punish Estrada must be undertaken immediately. Any hesitation on this matter serves Estrada's interest to evade the people's verdict. All steps and legal and political maneuvers that would allow Estrada and his cohorts to get away with their crimes against the people must be thoroughly opposed and defeated.

We must renounce any secret negotiation between the government and Estrada starting from agreements forged according to the principle of allowing Estrada a "dignified exit". This would include schemes to allow Estrada to live in exile in the name of preserving "peace and stability". There should be corresponding punishment for the atrocities perpetrated by Estrada on the people.

Appropriate punishment must also be meted out to Estrada's biggest cronies and partners in crime including those who defected just now to save themselves from falling along with Estrada.

Macapagal-Arroyo must remember that the people will not allow a "healing of wounds" based on granting Estrada the chance of a "dignified exit". More than anything, the wounds and lashes inflicted on the people under the Estrada regime must be healed by means of punishing Estrada and addressing the cry for national and social change. **AB**



The new Macapagal-Arroyo government

## Bringing back the US-Ramos regime

**T**he vast majority of the Macapagal-Arroyo government's newly appointed officials are retired generals and bureaucrats who had previously served under Ramos' corrupt, puppet and militarist regime or have close ties with him. The people must vigorously object to the appointment of Ramos men, especially notorious fascists and those with records of trampling on the masses' interests.

First on the list of Ramos men who now hold high positions in the Macapagal-Arroyo regime is Renato de Villa. De Villa, a former AFP general and former defense secretary under Ramos, inherited the powerful post of executive secretary.

Eduardo Ermita, another former general and Macapagal-Arroyo's newly appointed secretary of defense, has long been closely linked to Ramos. He served as Ramos' aide-de-camp when the latter was chief of the Philippine Constabulary under the Marcos dictatorship. When Ramos became president, he appointed Ermita as deputy chief of staff of the AFP. Afterwards, Ermita ran for congress under Ramos' party, Lakas-NUCD. Because of his psywar expertise, Ramos appointed Ermita to the government panel that negotiated in 1997 to arrange for the surrender of the Moro National Liberation Front.

Dep. Dir. Gen. Leandro Mendoza, the new Philippine National Police (PNP) chief, is part of the pro-Ramos faction. He is involved in murder, kidnap-for-ransom and jueteng, anomalous transactions in the PNP and other criminal activities.

PNP Dep. Dir. Gen. Reynaldo Wycoco, the new National Bureau of Investigation chief, was police spokesperson and served as PNP chief for the National Capital Region under Ramos.

Col. Victor Corpus, another psywar expert and the newly appointed head of the Intelligence Service of the AFP, has been a protégé of Ramos since the latter was secretary of defense under the Aquino regime. For years, Ramos watched over and guided Corpus' military career until the latter was installed in his current post. Corpus was one of the designers of the counterrevolutionary series of military campaigns dubbed Lambat Bitag in the 1980s and 1990s.

Renato Corona, Macapagal-Arroyo's chief of staff and acting spokesperson, was Ramos' former assistant executive secretary and Presidential Legal Adviser.

Hernando Perez, the new secretary of the Department of Justice, is the spokesperson of Ramos' Lakas-NUCD party.

Emilia Boncodin, the new budget secretary, was the department's undersecretary under Ramos.

Richard Gordon, the new tourism secretary, was former chair of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority under Ramos.

Dante Canlas, current National Economic Development Authority secretary, used to serve as a

technocrat and deputy director of the agency in the Ramos government.

Paul Dominguez, the Macapagal-Arroyo government's Presidential Assistant for Regional Development and "special envoy to Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia" was Ramos' Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Affairs.

Simeon Datumanong, the new secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways, is a prominent member of Lakas-NUCD.

Winston Garcia, the new president and general manager of the Government Service Insurance System, is part of the Garcia clan of Cebu, who are known supporters of Ramos.

It is also quite evident in Macapagal-Arroyo's appointment of pro-IMF technocrats who had served under Ramos that she will also be a zealous advocate of imperialist "globalization".

Roberto Romulo, who has been appointed "special envoy for international competitiveness" was formerly Department of Foreign Affairs secretary under Ramos.

Rizalino Navarro, "special envoy for Southeast Asia and Australia" was the former secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry of the Ramos government.

Raul Rabe, "special envoy to the Americas and Islamic nations", was former ambassador to the US under Ramos.

Ramos himself has been given a prominent role by Macapagal-Arroyo as her "special envoy to the World Economic Forum". AB



## Factions within the police and the military

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO ASSUMED the presidency amid serious factionalism within the ranks of the military and police and a mad scramble among the various sections of the ruling class to benefit from the Estrada clique's ouster, attain power and share in its corresponding perks and privileges. In fact, the existence of various factions within the AFP and PNP merely mirrors the intense rivalries within the ruling class.

The new ISAFP chief Col. Victor Corpus has himself declared that there are many military officials who do not completely accept Macapagal-Arroyo as the new president, and that this would continue to be a source of threats to the stability of the new government. Behind such discontent is the disgust of elements within the reactionary classes who have not benefited from the new power-sharing arrangements under the current regime.

The Ramos-de Villa faction has emerged dominant, based on the composition of Macapagal-Arroyo's cabinet. Under the direction and orders of US imperialism, it was the Ramos-de Villa faction that maneuvered to launch the staged defection of top military and police officials like Gen. Angelo Reyes and Lt. Gen. Jose Calimlim.

Despite Estrada's ouster, however, Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco wields immense power in the AFP through Reyes and Calimlim who were appointed upon Danding's orders. Now that Estrada has been ousted, Danding Cojuangco is using his deep influence within the military and police to ensure that the

## The role of Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco in the final months of the Estrada regime

Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, Joseph Estrada's godfather, is the most cunning creature alive. When the Estrada regime was in its death throes, he poured in billions of pesos to keep his minions in government in power, but all the while ensuring that his vast empire would remain unscathed in case Estrada falls. At the same time, he prepared a counter-campaign against the incoming regime of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The family and cronies of the despised dictator Marcos such as Lucio Tan and Cojuangco benefited much under the Estrada regime. As early as his fifth day in office, Estrada had seated Cojuangco as chair of the San Miguel Corporation (SMC), voting him in using government-sequestered shares. By December last year, Estrada had also handed over the coco levy funds to Cojuangco by virtue of an executive order. Cojuangco's minions were appointed to the highest posts of the Estrada cabinet. Estrada also expanded and fortified Cojuangco's camp within the military. In all of ►

Macapagal-Arroyo government does not undertake any move that would be detrimental to his interests.

On the other hand, a group headed by a former general, Fortunato Abat and his son-in-law, PNP Col. Jaime Caringal, is allied with Jose "Peping" Cojuangco. The group mobilized Scout Ranger troops and AFP brigades in an attempted coup days before the EDSA 2 uprising began on the night of January 16. They had planned to take over Camp Crame to arrest or neutralize pro-Estrada PNP officials led by Dir. Gen. Panfilo Lacson and Col. Michael Ray Aquino.

Peping Cojuangco's group, one of the original organizers of the broad anti-Estrada united front, did not benefit much from the new power

arrangements.

Also among those who did not benefit was the group led by Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson whose exposés of Estrada's anomalies in October precipitated the rapid exacerbation of the Estrada regime's political crisis. With Singson in the group is Lt. Gen. Edgardo Espinosa, former Southcom and Philippine Marines chief and currently the head of the AFP Joint Command and Staff College.

Aside from those mentioned, there are at least nine more minor factions in the AFP and PNP that acted independently of each other to overthrow Estrada. Each faction represented a reactionary politician desiring to overthrow the Estrada clique to advance his own interests. ▀

► the government's important decisions and negotiations, Cojuangco's hand was ever present. Cojuangco, the late dictator Marcos' biggest crony, had not only been resurrected—both his political and economic clout had grown immensely.

### POLITICAL MANEUVERS

Cojuangco had a distinct role in the Estrada regime, especially during the latter's last months in Malacañang. He was one of those who most stubbornly objected to Estrada's voluntary resignation. It was only in October last year that he ordered his trusted henchman Ernesto Macea to 1) consolidate and further fortify LAMP, the alliance of pro-Estrada parties; 2) orchestrate a pro-Estrada propaganda campaign; and 3) remove Rep. Manuel Villar as House speaker and Sen. Franklin Drilon as senate president because their defection from the Estrada camp was certain.

Using a huge amount of bribe money, Cojuangco was able to swear into his National People's Coalition party 40 congressmen, lure 15 of the 77 signatories of the impeachment complaint to defect and place Arnulfo Fuenteabella, Macea's close friend, as the speaker of the House of Representatives. In collaboration with another cunning politician, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, he ensured that Estrada's acquittal would be secured with enough votes in the reactionary senate.

He orchestrated the strategy for Estrada's defense and salvation in the impeachment court. He "lent" the services of his counsel Estelito Mendoza (as an official member of the defense panel) and SMC vice president Ramon Ang (as an unofficial member of the defense panel) to spearhead Estrada's legal defense. Cojuangco also bankrolled a big team of lawyers that hatched up various schemes to conceal crucial evidence

and prolong the trial. He also mobilized his stable of politicians to harass and threaten the witnesses.

Outside the impeachment court, the Cojuangco-Estrada tandem was active in deceiving the people and sowing terror, in accordance with two operational plans that aimed to uplift Estrada's dirty image. They came up with a bogus peace agreement between the reactionary government and its special agents in the counterrevolutionary group of Arturo Tabara in Negros on December 10. Falsely believing that they could bribe the leaders of the anti-Estrada movement, Estrada "promised" to free political detainees and rescind the death penalty. But the most despicable plot of the Cojuangco-Estrada partnership was the terrorist bombing conducted by their underlings in several public places on December 30. Twenty-two persons were killed in the bombing and more than 100 were injured. The intent was to divert the public's attention from the scandalous information being revealed in the trial and point their bloody fingers to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, New People's Army, to rightists or any other group. They perpetrated this heinous crime to launch the anti-Moro war in Mindanao anew and tighten the fascist cordon around Metro Manila.

### ENSURING HIS ECONOMIC INTERESTS

Behind his efforts to keep Estrada in power, Cojuangco was quietly prepared for the possibility of the former's ouster. Long before the actual trial, he consolidated his holdings in SMC and continuously prepared to gain control of the coco levy funds.

He expanded the scope of, and fortified his, leadership over the SMC's operations. SMC successively bought Sugarland, Philippine Dominion (maker of canned tuna) and

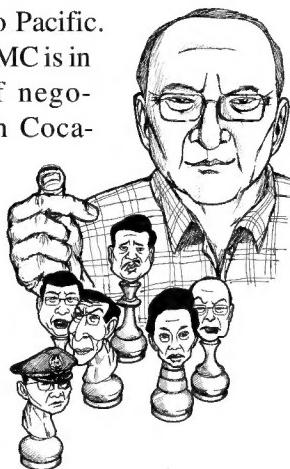
part of Metro Pacific. At present, SMC is in the thick of negotiations with Coca-Cola Amatil to purchase 65% of the company. Cojuangco also clandestinely bought an additional

20% of SMC shares through a buy-back scheme in order to strengthen his position as the company's biggest shareholder. Thus, even if the remaining 27% sequestered shares are sold to other businessmen, Cojuangco shall retain control of the company.

A few weeks before his ouster, Estrada had signed an executive order legalizing Cojuangco's acquisition of the coco levy funds through the establishment of a "foundation". Before this, Estrada had fortified Cojuangco's control over the coconut industry where the latter schemingly manipulated the price of copra. In a span of a few days in February 2000, the price of copra plummeted from P18/kilo to P2.50/kilo. Cojuangco also cancelled the fake stock certificates that he distributed in 1998 to farmers in a sequestered piece of land in Negros. It will be recalled that this formed part of the "stock-sharing" scheme of the Department of Agrarian Reform that was then headed by his minion Horacio "Boy" Morales.

### COJUANGCO AFTER ESTRADA

Despite Estrada's ouster, Cojuangco retains immense power in the economy and in a significant part of the country's politics and military. So long as the current ruling clique does not directly go against him,



Cojuangco may yet arrive at an understanding with Macapagal-Arroyo. Nonetheless, cunning as he is, Cojuangco stands ready to use his groups within the military and police, his minions in congress, the senate and local governments and his lawyers to carry out a destabilization plot against the new regime and put in power anyone who would be "friendlier" to him and his interests. From questioning the legality of Macapagal-Arroyo's presidency to resorting to threats and actually launching a coup d'état, Cojuangco will do everything to protect his interests. The P2 billion he has allotted to do this is small potatoes compared to what he may lose should his assets, both open and clandestine, be frozen or investigated.

Cojuangco has already invested so much on his politician-minions for him to simply relinquish his economic and political power. At present, Cojuangco is furiously preparing for the May elections. He would not hesitate to resort to the dirtiest, most violent schemes to put his candidates in power.

As with Estrada, it is necessary to make the biggest cronies of his regime, especially his godfather Cojuangco, answerable for their relentless plunder and thievery of the people's money. Cojuangco must likewise be held answerable for his anti-peasant and anti-worker moves within his corporations. He must also be charged for the crimes he perpetrated in the name of the Estrada regime. The justice demanded by the Filipino people has been long in coming. **AB**

# The gigantic, militant and peaceful mass actions that ousted Estrada

**F**rom January 16 to 20, the Filipino people dealt the death blow against the despised Estrada regime through a historic uprising.

In the span of four days, the entire nation was shaken by protest rallies joined by at least a million people echoing the calls "Erap, resign now!", "*Patalsikin si Erap* (Oust Erap)!", "*Hatol ng bayan, guilty si Erap* (The people's verdict: Erap is guilty)!" and "*Sigaw ng bayan, arrestuhin si Erap* (The people's cry: Arrest Erap)!". Workers, the youth, peasants, women, the urban poor, professionals and government employees, businessmen, church people, cultural workers and other sectors, including anti-Estrada factions in the military and reactionary politicians, united to launch gigantic, militant and peaceful mass actions. From factories, schools, offices and impoverished communities in the cities and the countryside, they trooped to major thoroughfares in various parts of the country. They raised an unprecedented storm that compelled rabid reactionaries in the Estrada camp, as well as the fascist military and police, to turn their backs against their president, until Estrada himself was eventually forced to relinquish power.

**Evening of January 16.** The public's anger against the regime exploded when the senate voted against the viewing of documents detailing Estrada's P3.3-billion bank account. Private prosecutors as well as ordinary folk who had been observing the trial walked out, with the public prosecutors following suit by announcing their withdrawal the next day. A disappointed people found opportunity to ventilate their outrage against the senate's blatant suppression of the truth when the public was enjoined to gather at the

EDSA shrine. Within a few minutes, tens of thousands of demonstrators had massed up at the EDSA-Ortigas intersection and along streets and plazas in cities and towns all over the country.

In the dead of night, Metro Manila and the cities of Angeles, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Bacolod, Davao, Iloilo, Dumaguete and Cotabato were livened up by noise barrages, text messages and lightning rallies. People chanted, honked their horns, pounded pots and pans and aired anti-Estrada jingles full blast. Various statements demanding the immediate resignation of Estrada and calling for people to join massive protests flooded newspapers, radios, television, the internet and telephone lines.

The broad anti-Estrada united front including BAYAN, Bayan Muna, Kangkong Bigade, Estrada Resign Movement, COPA, Kompil II, the United Opposition, UCCP, CBCP, PCCI, MBC and other sectoral and multisectoral groups in the country's various centers, tightened their coordination in order to push for Estrada's resignation. In Davao, anti-Estrada forces led by the Konsensiya sa Katawhan, systematized their coordination of protest actions with other groups in Mindanao and Manila.

**January 17.** The people made sure to continue pouring into the streets until Estrada resigned. Factory and transport strikes, school boycotts, community barricades, office

walkouts and big demonstrations were launched to topple Estrada. Students, teachers, employees and officials of UP, UST, PUP, FEU, La Salle, Ateneo, Miriam, Poveda, St. Scholastica's College, St. Joseph's College, Mindanao State University, Immaculate Conception College of Ozamis and St. Anthony's College of Antique were only some of the hundreds of schools around the nation that joined the mass actions. Officials and employees of the Department of Foreign Affairs, National Food Authority, National Economic Development Authority, Department of Labor and Employment and other government agencies also participated.

Delegations of peasants, workers, women, youth and minorities from Central and Southern Luzon readied to troop to EDSA. They were determined to go to Manila to join forces with the more than 275,000 protesters, even if the police had earlier blocked more than 50 busloads of protesters from the cities of Olongapo, Naga and various other areas in Southern Tagalog.

People from various sectors, whose numbers swelled with the presence of elementary, high school, college, medical and law students, continued to hold rallies, noise barrages and candlelight vigils in Ozamis; Roxas, Capiz; Cebu; Maasin, Southern Leyte and other cities and towns in the Visayas and Mindanao.

**January 18.** Estrada fanned the flames of the people's wrath as he stubbornly clung to power despite the growing ranks of protesters. At this point, some of his closest friends had already decided to go against Estrada.

With most of them in black as a symbol of protest against Estrada, more than 10,000

workers, employees and company officials, including those from the Philippine Stock Exchange, walked out of their Makati offices holding up placards and streamers. They formed a human chain that stretched from Makati to the EDSA Shrine.

Government officials from the Cordillera also marched along Session Road in Baguio, launched prayer rallies and lit candles. Law students from the Baguio Colleges Foundation staged a walk out and rallied in front of Estrada's Baguio mansion. The Diocese of Dagupan-Lingayen and the Erap Agco La! (Enough, Erap! Movement) of Pangasinan, Bulakeños, around 500 members of the Bayombong-Quirino Diocese and the church people of Lucena also joined mass actions.

In the Visayas, rallyists in San Jose, Antique (2,500) and Roxas City (3,000) grew in number.

Rallies in Mindanao continued, with the chants "Erap, kanaog na!" (Erap, step down!) and "Tangtangon na si Erap!" (Oust Erap!). Protest actions were launched by people in Ozamis City, Pagadian City and in the towns of Tukuran and Dumalinao in Zamboanga Del Sur. More than 1,000 people joined protest actions in Cotabato. In Marawi City, around 2,000 members of the Bangsamoro Youth Movement called for the resignation of Estrada and a stop to military operations in Lanao.

**January 19.** According to the Kilusang Mayo Uno, more than 450 companies employing 70 to 1,200 workers each supported the general

workers' strike. The Catholic Education Association of the Philippines, meanwhile, which has 1,173 member schools across the country, declared the third day of EDSA 2 as a "National Day

of Protest". Employees of the Commission on Human Rights also staged a walkout upon hearing of the attack of a pro-Estrada pack on anti-Estrada protesters and how the police blocked the latter's path. They said: "There are no human rights under the Estrada administration."

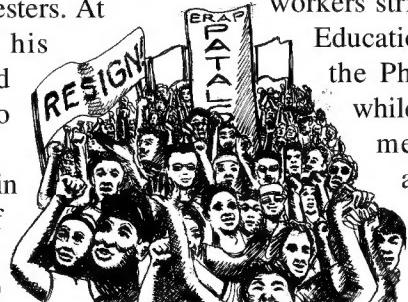
Students, professionals, government employees, church people, businessmen and politicians marched in cities all over the country: Baguio (5,000), Dagupan (5,000), Cebu (20,000), Iloilo (12,000), Bacolod (100,000), and Davao (10,000).

In Pampanga, a transport strike was launched and a walkout was staged by workers and students led by the Coalition for the Ouster of Erap or CORE.

Coordinated mass actions were also held in Kalibo, Aklan and in the towns of Molave, Mahayag, Tambulig, Dumingag and Josefina in Zamboanga del Sur.

That food and drink for the protesters (mostly coming from the basic sectors and the petty bourgeoisie) never ran out was a source of awe for many and was another sign of the sheer breadth of the anti-Estrada front. Ample food supplies were ensured by anti-Estrada big businessmen, but it was the nameless ones who nurtured the rallyists that proved to be unforgettable—they ranged from those who occasionally threw biscuits from the Ortigas flyover to the simple pandesal vendor who gave away hot bread for free to rallyists who stayed at EDSA till the wee hours of the morning.

**March to Mendiola.** By evening of January 19, 10 cabinet members and government officials, including those at the head of the regime's fascist machinery such as Angelo Reyes, Orlando Mercado and Panfilo Lacson, had already withdrawn support from ►



Campaign Plan Balangai

# Continuing fascist attacks in Southern Tagalog

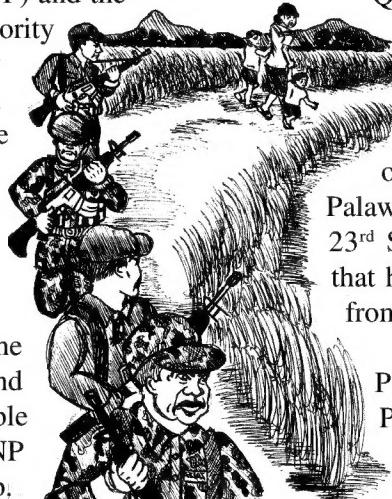
Contrary to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's declaration that she would renounce Estrada's total war policy, there are continuing attempts to crush the revolutionary movement in Southern Tagalog. To date, Macapagal-Arroyo has not issued any direct order to terminate a counterrevolutionary scheme hatched up by the Estrada government—Campaign Plan Balangai.

On January 28, a civilian was killed when Scout Ranger forces under Task Force Banahaw attacked Sitio Talipan, Barangay Magsaysay, Siniloan, Laguna. Four NPA fighters were killed in the ensuing firefight, all of them shot in the back, while one was wounded. Four other civilians were picked up that same day in Barangay Kapatalan, Siniloan and accused of being NPA fighters.

Campaign Plan Balangai aims to thwart the continued and rapid advance of the revolutionary movement in the region. Under its auspices, enemy campaigns and operations continue to intensify in villages and towns of Southern Tagalog considered as solid bases of the revolution.

In this regard, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) continue to investigate priority barangays to pinpoint barrios that serve as centers of gravity for guerrilla fronts and crush the revolutionary mass base in these areas. Intelligence work is being intensified, the paramilitary CAFGU strengthened and psychological operations stepped up. Despite the concentration of up to 60% of AFP and PNP forces on the anti-Moro campaign in Mindanao, the regime maintained military and police strike forces in the region's leading guerrilla fronts.

It is also the military and police's objective to protect the interests of big foreign investors with projects in the region and suppress the raging mass movement against such antipeople projects. In Mindoro, for instance, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the PNP Special Action Force guards the CREW Mineral Mining Corp.



whose operations are based in Victoria, Oriental Mindoro. On the other hand, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Special Forces Coy of the Philippine Army in Palawan, the PNP Regional Mobile Group in Mindoro and the 35<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Coy of the Philippine Army in Batangas stand guard over the laying of the Malampaya Gas Pipe Line that shall pass from northern Palawan and Mindoro through to Iligan, Batangas.

Deployed in the region at present is the 201st Bde of the Philippine Army's 2<sup>nd</sup> ID, with its headquarters in Rizal Ilaya, Caluag, Quezon and its area of operations covering most of Quezon, the Quezon-Bicol border and Marinduque island. Also deployed in the region is Task Force Banahaw that includes the 4<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Battalion and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Scout Ranger Battalion. Task Force Banahaw concentrates its attacks on Laguna, Rizal, Batangas, Cavite and part of

Quezon. There is one Philippine Air Force company with southern Palawan as its area of operations. Northern Palawan is covered by the 23<sup>rd</sup> Special Forces Coy that had been transferred from Cebu.

Meanwhile, Philippine National Police assault forces are concentrated in Southern Tagalog's

## ◀ Estrada.

Nevertheless, the protesters insisted on continuing the struggle until Estrada resigned. Confetti poured. The people continued chanting "Erap, resign now!". With hardly any elbow space between them, the throng occupied the almost two-kilometer stretch from Shaw Blvd. to Santolan Road. Their determination to push through with the march to Malacañang the next day to pressure Estrada to resign, prevailed.

Marching with a wave of balloons, streamers and

banners, and with the police that had turned its back on Estrada at the last minute, the sea of protesters swiftly filled the intersection of Recto and Legarda, which is only half a kilometer away from Malacañang. A rally, fired by passionate speeches and a cultural presentation that highlighted classic and contemporary songs and dances of protest, was peacefully conducted. Moments later, it turned into a celebration, when news broke out that Estrada and his family had finally fled Malacañang using a palace back exit to evade the Mendiola protesters. ▀

island provinces. The 4<sup>th</sup> PNP Regional Mobile Group covers Occidental Mindoro while a battalion of the PNP Special Action Force (SAF) has its area of operations in Oriental Mindoro. There is likewise a newly deployed PNP SAF battalion based in Victoria, Oriental Mindoro.

Various military intelligence units such as MIG-4, MIG-14, 79-MICO and MITU that are deployed in the region are integrated into the different military assault units. It is these intelligence units that recruit former New People's Army (NPA) fighters as informers and CAFGU elements and use them in counterrevolutionary operations and propaganda.

The enemy, at present, launches a two-pronged attack against the revolutionary movement's armed force—first, it attacks the NPA's armed units and second, undertakes a widespread campaign to try to isolate the NPA from the people through the counterrevolutionary activities of its special operations teams.

Nonetheless, the enemy is unable to do this as often and as intensely, using the same level of strength and covering the same breadth as before. There has been a major decrease in the number of enemy battalions deployed in Southern Tagalog since the US-Estrada regime began its anti-Moro war. As a result, military and police troops are extremely overextended.

Lacking personnel, the enemy is unable to exercise absolute superiority at all times. It makes up for this by conducting counter-guerrilla operations using small and flexible units highly skilled in combat, such as the Philippine Army's Special Forces and Scout Rangers.

These forces are now spread thinly through platoon- and squad-size formations. The enemy overextends its forces in its desire to cover vast areas within guerrilla fronts and confront the revolutionary forces in the region in several places all at once to thwart the revolution's rapid advance.

Despite renewed enemy attacks in the region, the revolutionary movement in Southern Tagalog has been able to sustain, in the year 2000, the momentum of all-sided advance in overall revolutionary work even as it consolidated itself. Intense attacks by fascist troops of the US-Estrada regime failed to thwart the trend of advance in all major lines of work.

In the field of armed struggle, the monster has bled from wounds inflicted in many parts of his body even as its growing head has been dealt frequent blows. Even before the April 2000 New Millennium Offensive of the NPA in Southern Tagalog, several major tactical offensives had been launched, targeting the most notorious AFP and PNP units. Following are a few examples:

- Successful operations, such as an ambush launched for the very first time on a unit of the Philippine Army's 9<sup>th</sup> Scout Ranger Coy in Mabitac and a raid conducted without firing a single shot in Sta. Maria, both in Laguna.

- Simultaneous raid on a detachment manned by extortionist units of the Provincial Mobile Group as well as the Land Transportation Office and Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Calauag; a no-shot raid on the Maritime Police

in Burdeos; a raid on a detachment of the 74<sup>th</sup> IB in Mulanay; and an ambush in Unisan—all in Quezon.

- Ambush on three vehicles of the Special Action Force-PNP in Victoria, Oriental Mindoro.

- Ambush in Sta. Cruz, Occidental Mindoro, that included two punitive operations on elements who have violated or refused to abide by the revolutionary movement's taxation policies on enemy classes.

Meanwhile, small operations that have yielded firearms and punished informers and bad elements continue. More than 40 high-powered rifles and more than 20 pistols as well as ammunition and other military equipment were seized and the equivalent of a section-size enemy force was killed in 10 major operations. An even bigger number of enemy troops surrendered in these firefights, and important transportation and communications equipment of the enemy were destroyed.

More frequent and more intense operations reflect the breadth and depth of support extended by the masses, such as actively transmitting information on the enemy's deployment and movements within guerrilla zones and fronts.

GUIDED BY the central task defined by the regional Party organization to "intensify guerrilla warfare and mass struggles while gaining strength and expanding and gaining strength while intensifying guerrilla warfare and mass struggles!", the revolutionary movement in Southern Tagalog is sure to continue in its advance and thwart Campaign Plan Balangai. **AB**

## STATEMENTS

### On the prisoners of war currently under the custody of the NPA

**Statement of Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, Spokesperson, Communist Party of the Philippines, January 24, 2001**

NOW THAT THE ESTRADA REGIME has been ousted, its militarist policy on, and neglect of, captured personnel and officers of the GRP now under the custody of the New People's Army must likewise be relinquished. The decision on whether the GRP should pay serious attention to the issue of the prisoners of war's release is now in Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's hands.

If Macapagal-Arroyo is interested in the release of their personnel, PCI Abelardo Martin and Army Maj. Noel Buan, the revolutionary movement is ready to talk with the emissaries of the GRP and receive and act positively on a formal request for the prisoners' release.

In the past, the revolutionary movement had shown its readiness to free its prisoners of war through negotiations when it released PCI Rene Francisco, Army Sgt. Joaquin Melad and SPO3 Martillano Magtagad in 1997 and Brig. Gen. Victor Obillo and Capt. Eduardo Montealto in 1999.

In response to the request of the Humanitarian and Peace Mission, the NDFP issued on February 11, 2000 the "Order to Release Police Chief Inspector Abelardo Martin".

The Estrada government's response was contrary to this humanitarian offer. Instead of ordering a ceasefire to give way to the release of the prisoners, Gen. Angelo Reyes and Estrada ordered the deployment of 15 AFP battalions in Southern Tagalog to launch a destructive "military rescue operation". Not even the twice-declared bogus suspension of offensive military operations could cover this up.

Likewise, contrary to the NPA's good treatment of prisoners in its custody and its recognition of their rights under international humanitarian law, the AFP implements a policy of torture and murder of captives as in the case of Armando "Ka Sixto" Cerna in Mindoro in January 2000 and Godofredo "Ka Paking" Guimbaolibot in Compostela Valley in August 1999.

For the prisoners of war to be released, Macapagal-Arroyo must renounce Estrada and Gen. Angelo Reyes' militarist outlook. She has to understand that any "military rescue operation" will fail just as Estrada and General Reyes failed; that the prisoners of war can only be

released through negotiations in accordance with international and humanitarian laws and rules of war and according to the principles and guidelines agreed upon by the NDFP and GRP during the NPA's release of its prisoners of war in 1997.

Buan has been charged before the people's court with espionage and war crimes. Martin is also facing charges filed by the masses in Dolores, Quezon where he once was PNP chief. Investigation, filing of cases and trial proceedings had already started last year.

Nonetheless, it remains the prerogative of the revolutionary organs of democratic people's government whether to continue or suspend these processes in order to give way to negotiations for the release of the prisoners on humanitarian grounds. The release may also be considered for political reasons such as the undertaking of confidence building measures for peace negotiations. Macapagal-Arroyo's release of political prisoners could also fulfill this objective.

In any case, if the NPA does not receive any formal request from the GRP for the release of Martin and Buan, it is prepared to hold the two in its custody for an indefinite period and guarantee that they shall be liberally and humanely treated and their rights respected in accordance with international humanitarian law and the rules of war.

### On the bombings in Metro Manila

**Statement by the Executive Committee of the CPP Central Committee, December 31, 2000**

THE SERIES OF BOMBINGS IN PUBLIC PLACES in Metro Manila on December 30, 2000 was a satanic scheme. The Communist Party of the Philippines and revolutionary movement strongly condemn it.

We also strongly condemn the brazen attempt by Malacañang to pin the blame on the revolutionary movement despite the absence of any investigation and even if the events and circumstances suggest the exact opposite.

The revolutionary movement or any part thereof has nothing to do with this beastly act. We vow to the families of the victims and to the people that the revolutionary movement shall do its utmost to pinpoint the masterminds and the perpetrators of this heinous crime and make them thoroughly answerable for it.

In fact, it is Malacañang, Joseph Estrada himself and his minions involved in atrocities such as the Kuratong Baleleng rubout, who are the number one

► suspects with the biggest motives, capability, opportunity and the stomach to perpetrate such a crime.

This kind of terrorism has been designed not only to kill, maim, wound and frighten-but to kill, maim, wound and frighten totally and on a massive scale. Its objective is not only to grab attention and space in the newspapers-but to thoroughly alter the content of the newspapers. It aims to completely smother the rank odor of the scandals exposed in the past three months and extricate from its besieged state the despised and moribund reactionary and puppet rule of Estrada and his cronies.

The explosives used were most likely C4 or plastic, which only the AFP and PNP possess-aside from those spirited away by the RAM in 1989. The targets were simultaneously attacked, including two or three that were under guard at a time when the PNP had been declared under maximum alert. The complexity of this entire operation points to a force with a large organization, a high level of military skills, highly advanced equipment for coordination and communication and close familiarity with the security system in particular targets and in the whole of Metro Manila.

The bombings at the end of December, after the attempted abduction and summary execution of Luis "Chavit" Singson in October, the abduction and silencing of Bubby Dacer in November, the widespread wiretapping of senators, oppositionists and anti-Estrada elements that was exposed in mid-December, the threats against and surveillance of witnesses against Estrada-all these demonstrate the clear pattern of the intensifying desperation of a criminal mind that has gone from unabashed graft and corruption to arrogantly playing with the rights and lives of political rivals and ordinary citizens.

We must immediately pinpoint the masterminds and the real perpetrators, make them thoroughly answerable to justice and assist the victims. Along with this, we must make sure that the bombings' evil objective is thwarted. Do not be frightened by such terrorism. Do not be deceived by bloody intrigue. Do not allow terrorism to derail the protest movement. Steadfastly advance the struggle to oust the monster in Malacañang before the end of the first quarter of 2001.

As the Communist Party has repeatedly clarified in the past, the struggle to oust Estrada is based and focused, above all else, on the legal protest movement in the cities. This becomes even truer now despite the bombings in Metro Manila. We must resolutely persevere in the legal struggle to oust Estrada.

Accordingly, the Communist Party once more declares its decision to purposely stop the conduct of military actions in Metro Manila to ensure the most favorable conditions for advancing the legal protest movement and not give the despised ruling Estrada regime the opportunity to use partisan operations of the New People's Army in Metro Manila as a pretext for suppressing and sowing discord in the protest movement.

Nonetheless, in the face of a clear pattern of intensifying fascist terrorism and threats of suppression against the unarmed mass movement, the New People's Army shall further intensify tactical offensives in the countryside. It is also necessary to expand and strengthen the underground movement in the cities. It is these that shall guarantee that even if the monster in Malacañang completely takes leave of his senses and runs amok-the people's struggle shall continue to persevere and advance. AB



## NEWS OF STRUGGLE

### COMPOSTELA VALLEY COP DISARMED

A policeman was disarmed by NPA fighters in Barangay Langgam, Maco, Compostela Valley in the evening of January 30.

The Red fighters took advantage of the fact that SPO4 Ernesto Cudal was resting in his house. Startled when the NPA approached him, Cudal had no choice but to surrender his .45 and cellphone. The fighters even talked Cudal into driving them to the highway using his own jeepney.

### CAFGU DETACHMENT IN SARANGANI RAIDED

Five M14s, four Garand rifles and communications equipment were seized by Red fighters when they raided a CAFGU detachment in Barangay Kenam, Malapatan, Sarangani on January 29. With the help of a CAFGU ally, the NPA successfully carried out the raid against the detachment guarded by a lone AFP soldier and two CAFGU elements.

### TACTICAL OFFENSIVES CONTINUE IN BICOL

Thirteen firearms of assorted caliber were confiscated and nine enemy troops were killed in six separate tactical offensives by the New People's Army (NPA) in Bicol this January and in the last days of the past month, according to a correspondence report from the Romulo Jallores Command of Bicol.

On January 29, a policeman was killed while another was seriously wounded in an ambush by NPA fighters in Barangay Mercedes, Pilar, Sorsogon.

An NPA team punished ►



## MACAPAGAL-ARROYO REGIME CHALLENGED; TALKS WITH RPMP-RPA-ABB, CONDEMNED IN NEGROS

Former peace talks consultant Jessie Lipura challenged the Macapagal-Arroyo regime to implement a pro-people program and condemned its plan to hold talks with the Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa-Pilipinas-Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPMP-RPA-ABB).

Lipura, who was captured on January 6 in Barangay Taloc, Bago City, Negros Occidental and temporarily freed on bail on January 30, was interviewed by the media upon his release.

According to Lipura, the people are expecting the Macapagal-Arroyo regime to lay down its much-vaunted people's agenda which includes the resumption of peace talks between the GRP and the NDFP and the release of all political prisoners.

Lipura said that the Arroyo government should

immediately abandon the former US-Estrada regime's Oplan Makabayan program and pull out its military troops in Mindanao and other parts of the country in order to put an end to all-out war and intensive militarization in the countryside. The deployment of military troops in the countryside, he said, is not the solution to society's fundamental problems, but instead wreaks havoc on the people. "It is the military that commits human rights violations," Lipura said.

He also strongly condemned the planned resumption of peace talks between the GRP and the counterrevolutionary RPMP-RPA-ABB. He said: "The only one who could benefit from such talks is former Ambassador Eduardo Cojuangco Jr." He also added that the RPMP-RPA-ABB are not protectors of the masses and are in fact paid goons of Cojuangco. **AB**

► on January 10, Roberto San Agustin, a CAFGU element under the notorious 42<sup>nd</sup> IB in Barangay Beguito Biejo, Libmanan, Camarines Sur. Aside from having been the foremost tong collector, San Agustin also recruited informers and directly served as a guide in military operations against the NPA. A .38 pistol was seized from him.

According to the same correspondence report, an NPA team burned a Superlines bus on January 4 in Sinuknidan, Del Gallego, Camarines Sur because of the company's continued refusal to pay revolutionary tax.

Two elements of the "A" coy of the 22<sup>nd</sup> IB were punished by an NPA team in Barangay Banquerohan, Legazpi City on December 31, 2000. Sgt. Alfredo Paitan and PFC Alex Vivar died on the spot. A .45 and a .38 were confiscated from them.

The Romulo Jallores

Command also said that the NPA conducted simultaneous raids against three PNP elements and a despotic landlord in Camarines Norte on December 28, 2000.

The NPA meted the death penalty on despotic and criminal landlord Francisco "Ike" Villafuerte, a relative of Gov. Luis Villafuerte of Camarines Sur. Villafuerte was notorious for grabbing a piece of land that was being cultivated by 48 families and was responsible for the destruction and burning of property and the mauling, incarceration and summary execution of farmers. He was also an agent of the Military Intelligence Group and directly coordinated with the head of the division operating in Bicol. Three .45s, two grenades and other military equipment were confiscated from him.

SPO4 Anatolio "Hudas" Villablanco, an element of the Jose Panganiban police force, was the

second target. Villablanco was despotic and proven to have gravely wronged the revolutionary movement and the people. He was meted the death penalty that same morning in Sta. Elena, Jose Panganiban, Camarines Norte. An M16 rifle and a .38 pistol were seized from him.

One M16 rifle, one .38 pistol, ammunition and other military equipment were confiscated from the houses of two other policemen in the same area.

Meanwhile, the Masbate NPA punished on December 25, 2000 SPO3 Edwin Espiloy and his brother SPO1 Efrahem Espiloy, both notorious elements of the Montreal police force in Masbate, at their residence in Barangay Real, Montreal. An M14 rifle, one 9 mm revolver and a .38 pistol were seized from them.

A three-man team of the NPA also punished the treacherous and abusive Edwin



Nacional, president of the Balikloob Foundation Inc., on December 22, 2000 at Marquez Street, Barangay 14, Legazpi City. The Balikloob Foundation Inc. is an instrument of the reactionary government to facilitate the surrender of NPA fighters and cadres and urge them to become intelligence agents for the fascist army.

### 21<sup>ST</sup> IB SOLDIER KILLED IN ENCOUNTER

A corporal of the 21<sup>st</sup> IB was killed and five others were wounded when they encountered an NPA team in Barangay Salecsec, Balbalan, Kalinga on January 22. The military troops were conducting a military operation when the Red fighters fired at them.

### SERIES OF PROTESTS LAUNCHED IN PAYATAS

The Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (KADAMAY) and July 10 Payatas Victims' Organization (J10PVO) trooped to the Quezon City Hall on January 29 to oppose the city government's grant of a permit for garbage to be dumped again in Payatas upon orders of Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. despite the absence of relocation for the thousands of families residing and making a living in the area. The picket was part of a series of mass actions launched on January 15 by the KADAMAY and the J10PVO to resist the hazardous dumping of garbage in Payatas, where hundreds were killed when a mountain of garbage collapsed in July 2000 and again, on January 26.

### MASSACRE OF TARLAC-14 CONDEMNED

Comrade Serafin Magdiwang, spokesperson of NPA-Tarlac condemned the gruesome killing by the fascist AFP and PNP of 14 Red fighters and cadres of the revolutionary movement on January 15 at Barangay San Vicente, only a few kilometers away from Tarlac City. In a statement, Magdiwang said that most of the victims had been shot in the head.

### RHB, MURDERER OF INNOCENTS

Jose Agtalon, spokesperson of the Josepino Corpuz Command of the NPA, strongly condemned the summary execution of civilians Eric "Ricky" Canlas, Jesse Bagtas and Noel dela Cruz by elements of the Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan (RHB). Canlas was a DSWD volunteer and an officer of Pampanga Radio Communication in Barangay San Antonio, Mexico, Pampanga. He was executed by the RHB shortly before the end of the year 2000 because of suspicion that he was a supporter of the NPA. Bagtas and dela Cruz were killed by the RHB on December 18. They were both ordinary fish vendors in the area.

### BATANGAS DEFENSIVE TRANSFORMED INTO OFFENSIVE BY NPA

A defensive situation was transformed into an offensive by the NPA when a group of Red fighters repulsed the attempt of Philippine Marine elements to encircle them in Sitio Nangkaan, Barangay Mataas na Pulo, Nasugbu, Batangas on January 7. The Red fighters killed two Marine soldiers while another soldier and a policeman were wounded in the 30-minute firefight. An M14 was seized from the dead soldier. To conceal their embarrassment, the Marines called the incident an "encounter".

### HACIENDA IN SAN NARCISO, QUEZON, RAIDED

NPA fighters burned on December 30, equipment and vehicles owned by Domingo Reyes, a landlord who persistently refused to pay revolutionary taxes and grabbed land from farmers. Reyes also owns the Ocean Palace Mall in Lucena City and Viva Shipping Lines, which regularly plies the Marinduque-Lucena route.

Among the pieces of equipment that were put to the torch were seven vehicles (four dump trucks, one firetruck, a tractor and a backhoe) and other machinery owned by the hacienda.